Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.
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EDITORIAL

I have had great difficulty in putting together this Newsletter, which as you will have realised is late. My Adler SE1000 typewriter, which I have used for nearly all the Chile and CA Newsletters has finally given up the ghost. The difficulty is not in buying another machine but in getting someone else to pay for it, which I have been able to do. I really do need one for my work! So if anyone would like the golf balls from the machine, or the remaining ribbons, which also fit an IBM Correcting Selectric and a Mag Card II, let me know.

You will have already seen that I have introduced a contents page. This is in response to a criticism of another journal which did not; the inside cover contains details of the Society and group which is in response to comments from several members. I hope that the membership approves these changes.

I would like to remind members of the forthcoming Spanish Main Cup competition which is likely to be on October 24th. Further details and confirmation will appear in our next issue. However I hope the prior warning will encourage you to consider putting in an entry.

I am a little concerned about the lack of response to the revenue listing which has been appearing over the last few issues. Whilst there have been some changes, I feel that the listing could be more complete than it is. I do urge all you revenue collectors to compare your stamps with the listing and let me know of any discrepancies. I would be pleased to have reports of revenues dated after 1950 in readiness for the next issue. I can only list one stamp for some dates and none for others. Please do examine your stamps.

Finally I have received from Geoff Kellow of Melbourne a copy of his new publication 'Combination Mail of British Post Offices Abroad'. It is beautifully produced and illustrated, many covers in colour. This 48 page booklet will shortly be available from Vera Trinder at about £16. I found the Nicaragua section most informative regarding the postal rates in force; details I have not seen published elsewhere.

mpb

WHY MEXICO? by MARINO RIOSA

There is some confusion about how to correctly assign Mexico on the World Map. In some auction catalogues that I recently received I have found Mexico within the South American section. Stanley Gibbons places this country with other Central American countries, but if you ask the question of a Mexican native, the answer will be, without hesitation, NORTH AMERICA.

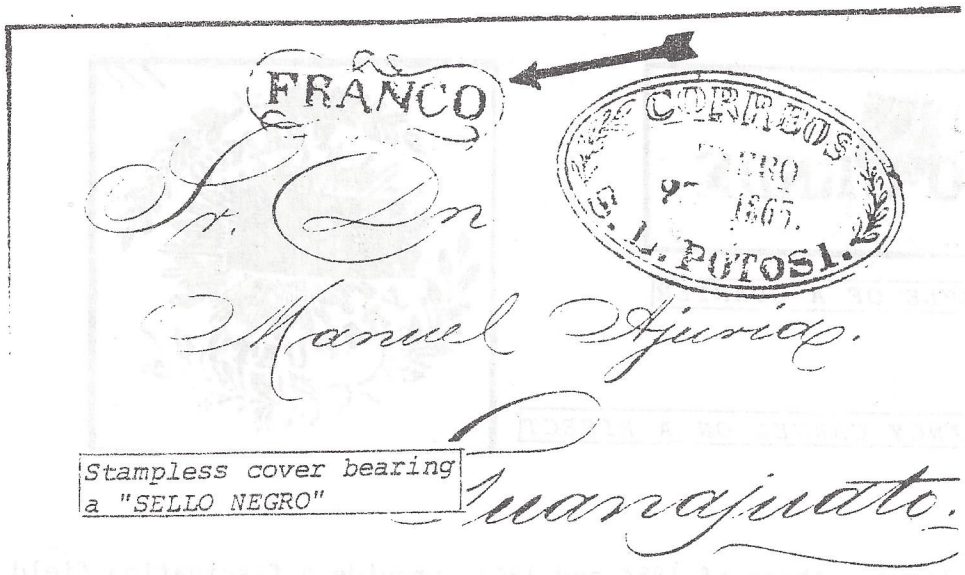
One thing is sure philatelically speaking, this lovely country has been awfully neglected on this side of the pond, even in our specialised Study Group. Hard to say why, as any period chosen can offer an intriguing field of collecting and studying, and can give to the collector many interesting years of enjoyment at an affordable cost.

Hence I have prepared this contribution with the hope that we will stimulate your interest and to promote the unique philately of Mexico. But let us see, more closely, why Mexico.

With the Conquest, Spain instituted in Mexico a mail service patterned after the one that was in use in Europe. However, postal markings did not begin to appear until about the beginning of the 18th Century, and it was in Mexico where the first postal mark of the Americas was used.

While most mail was postmarked with a straight-line marking showing the name of the city or town of origin, fancy designs, beautifully carved from hard wood or made out of brass, were also used. Pre-stamp covers of Mexico are plentiful and still affordable to the average collector. An excellent reference for these items is the "Pre-stamp Postal Markings of Mexico" by Bask-Yag.

The advent of adhesive postage stamps in 1856 did not put an end to stampless covers where Official Mail was concerned (the first Official stamps started to be used in the 1880's) and when, in the absence of stamps from the post office, postmasters had to revert to the use of the "Sello Negro".



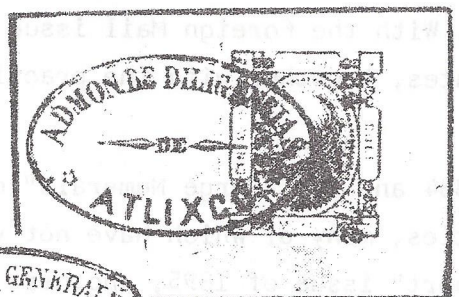
Stampless cover bearing a "SELLO NEGRO"

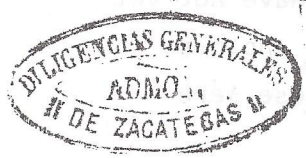
The "Sello Negro" was a handstamp reading either "FRANCO" or "FRANQUEADO" and indicated that postage has been prepaid at the post office of origin.

In February of 1856 regulations were approved for the introduction and use of postage stamps and five values were prepared; they were the one-half real in blue, the one real in yellow, the two reales in green, the four reales in red and the eight reales in violet. On the first day of August the first shipment of stamps was dispatched.

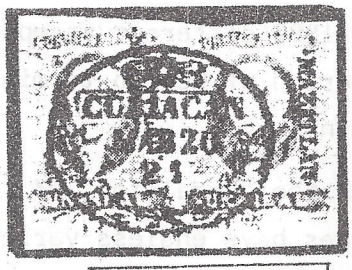
The Postal Administration, taking into consideration the long and hazardous distances between the Capital and the Postal District, devised a system that would provide safeguards and prevent the illegal use of stolen stamps. This system, simple and effective, is unique in all the history of philately, and it worked as follows. The country was already divided into Postal Districts, with each District the responsibility of a single head-office. The stamps were sent from Mexico City to the District Office in an incomplete state. Upon arrival, the stamps were validated by overprinting the name of the receiving district on each stamp and not until these district names were overprinted, were the stamps valid for postage.

Once received at the District Office, and validated there, supplies of the stamps were then sent to all sub-offices in that District. From these small offices we have a great wealth of the cancellations that are so intriguing to collectors. Many of them were holdovers from the pre-stamp period and were generally produced by local craftsmen.





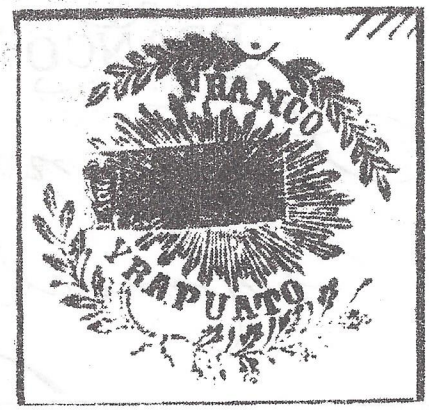
"DILIGENCIAS" Cancel



FANCY CANCEL

1856 Issue with a District Overprint (enlarged)

EXAMPLE OF A QUARTER



FANCY CANCEL ON A BISECT

Mexico's earliest issues, those of 1856 and 1861, provide a fascinating field of study and collecting. After these issues, the 1864 JUAREZ set was ordered from the American Bank Note Company. This issue never saw general distribution and genuine stamps postally used or on cover are very scarce or rare. The French intervention, which lasted from 1862 until into 1867, saw the so-called "EAGLES" and "MAXIMILIAN" stamps come into use. After the fall of Maximilian Emperor, there were a few of the old 1861 stamps in the Republican government vaults as well as the plates from which they had been printed. From these plates and old stock, some stamps were issued, but only in quantities sufficient to supply offices in the Capital. These stamps were overprinted with the name "MEXICO" in gothic type, and they are known as "the gothics".

Until new stamps were issued in 1868, some of the larger offices such as Guadalajara made use once more of provisional stamps. With the 1868 and 1872 issues, stamps became a normal commodity. These two issues are replete with varieties of type, colour, retouches, district numbers, papers, perforation and everything and anything to delight and confound the specialist.

Just to give an example, during the validity of the 1868 stamps, a postal fraud was effected by printing officers and several stamps with forged overprint district were sold to a large user in Mexico City.

In 1874 Mexico again ordered an issue from the ABNCo, and obtained the plates and made later printings in Mexico. Outside of the 1864 issue, this was Mexico's first perforated issue. This issue, known as the Hidalgo of 1874-83, offers an interesting field of study; it has been stated that a collection of the 25c blue only could range in the region of 1300-1500 different stamps! With the Foreign Mail issue of 1879 and 1882, the classic period of Mexico terminates, together with the practice of District Numbers and overprints.

Modern Mexico commences with the "Medallion" of 1884 and the "Large Numerals" of 1886. All the foregoing issues have endless varieties, many of which have not yet been adequately researched. After the "Mail Transport" issue of 1895, another challenging set, come the 1899, 1903 and 1910 "Centennial" issues. These were

ordered from, and printed in England, by Bradbury & Wilkinson and Co., being the last in use during the early years of Revolution that commenced in November 1910.

The first "Revolutionary" stamps did not appear until 1913, but until the main fighting stopped in late 1915, there were many issues put out by the various factions involved in the hostilities. The late teens and early 1920's gave issue to legitimate series of stamps, in stable currency, and the 1930's brought forth many beatiful commemoratives as well as definitive sets, among them the famous "Pro-Universidad" stamps.

Collectors will also find a wonderful field of collecting in the back-of-the-book stamps, as Revenues, Special Delivery, Porte de Mar, postal-tax issues and last but not least, cancellations and postmarks. And not to forget the postal stationery of Mexico, always regarded as one of the most picturesque and varied.

Mexico is a specialised field of collecting and one that offers many years of enjoyment at a very nominal cost.

Many books are available to help the collector and the postal histroian, and curiously, the most authoritative authors are Englishmen. Works from Samuel Chapman, H T Wilson and Josling are milestones of Mexican philately.

Two major philatelic societies are entirely devoted to this country, MEPSI and AMEXFIL. While the latter is from Mexico City, MEPSI is a very active Society in the United States. Founded 50 years ago at Elmhurst, near Chicago, MEPSI is today an expanding international society with almost 1000 members from all over the world. The quarterly journal, MEXICANA, has been published since 1952.

MEPSI, 1014 37th Street, San Pedro, CA 90731, USA.

THE RAILWAYS OF EL SALVADOR by DR ANTHONY GOODBODY

Introduction

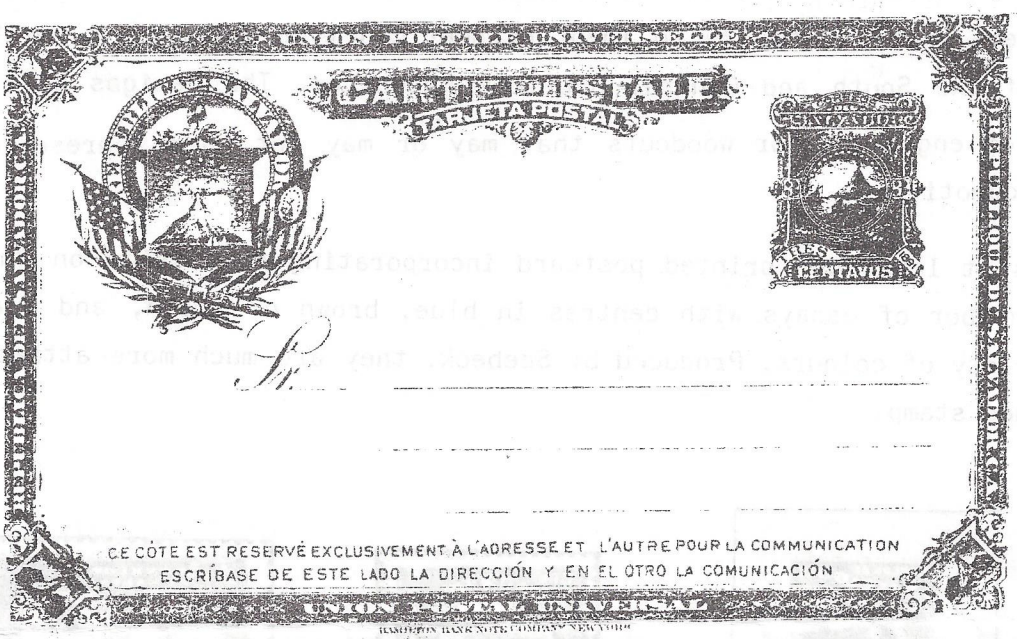
El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated of the Central American Republics. It is bounded on the west by Guatemala and on the north and east by Honduras. Along with Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, El Salvador gained independence from Spain in 1822.

The Salvador National Railways, (Ferrocarriles Nacionales de El Salvador or FENADESAL) consists of 602 km of 3 ft gauge track. Of this, 160 km were formerly operated by the Salvador Railway Company which was British owned until it was nationalised in 1962. This part of the system runs from Puerto de Acajutla on the Pacific coast, to the Capital, San Salvador. There is also a branch to Santa Ana. The remaining 442 km were owned by the former International Railways of Central America, which connected with the Guatemalan system to the west, and with the Salvador Railway at Santa Ana and at San Salvador. From San Salvador the former I.R.C.A. line goes on to Cutaco in the extreme south east of the country.

A recently published stock list indicates that Salvador Railways own nineteen steam locomotives, most of which were built by Baldwin. Only four of these were said to be in working order. One is preserved and the rest are dumped or "under repair". I have no record of the early development of railways in El Salvador but locomotives 2 and 5 on the stock list were built in 1893 by Baldwin and Cooke respectively. It is quite probable therefore that the first railways date from this time.

Definitive Issue, 1891. (SG 39-48)

These stamps show a ship and an old locomotive against a background of the San Miguel Volcano. San Miguel is on the former I.R.C.A. line, thirty-eight miles from Cutaco. There are five printed postcards in the same design numbered 9-13 in Higgins & Gage. These have face values of 1¢, 2¢, 3¢ and 2+2¢ and 3+3¢ reply card.


UNION POSTALE UNIVERSELLE
CARTE POSTALE
TARJETA POSTAL
REPUBLICA DE EL SALVADOR
CENTAVOS
CE CÔTE EST RESERVÉ EXCLUSIVEMENT À L'ADRESSE ET L'AUTRE POUR LA COMMUNICATION
ESCRÍBASE DE ESTE LADO LA DIRECCIÓN Y EN EL OTRO LA COMUNICACIÓN
UNION POSTAL UNIVERSAL

3¢ postal card of 1891

UNION POSTALE UNIVERSELLE
REPUBLICA DE
SALVADOR
CE CÔTE EST RESERVÉ EXCLUSIVEMENT À L'ADRESSE ET L'AUTRE POUR LA COMMUNICATION
ESCRÍBASE DE ESTE LADO LA DIRECCIÓN Y EN EL OTRO LA COMUNICACIÓN
Hamilton Bank Note Engraving & Printing Co New York.

3¢ postal card of 1896

Definitive Issue, 1896. (SG 160)

This locomotive, like the last one, is unidentified. It is an "American" type (4-4-0) but reference to the above mentioned stock list fails to reveal the presence of any 4-4-0's. Locomotives No.2 and No.5 of 1893 were 2-8-0's, while Nos.6, 7 & 8 of 1895/6 were Baldwin 4-6-0's. One is lead to the conclusion therefore, that it is a fruitless exercise to try to identify American type locomotives on the early stamps of the South and Central American Republics. The designs were probably taken from engravings or woodcuts that may or may not have represented actual steam locomotives.

There is at least one printed postcard incorporating the design on this stamp, also a number of essays with centres in blue, brown or green, and frames in a wide variety of colours. Produced by Seebeck, they are much more attractive than the issued stamp.

Seebeck essay of 1896

6¢ of 1924

1¢ of 1929

Definitive Issue, 1924. (SG 754)

This 6¢ stamp shows the bridge which carries the former I.R.C.A. line over the River Lampa at San Vincente, forty-four miles east of San Salvador.

Inauguration of the Railway Link between El Salvador and Guatemala, 1929.

The set of four stamps shows President Pio Romero Bosque of El Salvador and President Lazaro Chascon of Guatemala who met at the border between Anguiatu (Guatemala) and San Joromino (El Salvador) when the railway was opened.

Definitive Issue, 1935. (SG 864)

A tiny train is seen behind the harbour on this stamp (not illustrated). It is at the eastern extremity of the former I.R.C.A. line at Cutaco, 156 miles from San Salvador.

THE REVENUE STAMPS OF NICARAGUA

Continued from page 179. Comments on this tentative listing are invited.

General Issues

(Railway tickets surcharged "TIMBRE FISCAL" in capital letters will be found in the section dealing with the stamps of Zelaya.)

Engraved and printed by Waterlow & Sons Ltd. Perf 14-15. Size 20 x 24mm. Sheet size unknown, but these stamps are always found in blocks of 20, without sheet margins, as a maximum.

1903. Surcharged 'Timbre Fiscal/10 ctvs.' in black, in two lines reading downwards.

GI 1 10c on 1st
- a surcharge reading up
- b surcharge underprinted
- c sur underprinted, reading up

GI 2 5c on 2nd
- a surcharge reading up
- b 'ctvs' inverted
- c surcharge underprinted
- d surcharge in red-carmine
- e as in d, 'ctvs' inverted
- f as in d, underprinted
- g surcharge in red-brown
- h as in g, 'ctvs' inverted
- i as in g, underprinted

The surcharging of the above stamps was done in Managua with limited type. As a result each position of the matrix of 20 cliches can be identified and positioned. The surcharging was done haphazardly and numerous variants, such as surcharged both sides, double, double one inverted, triple etc are known.

1903. Engraved and printed by Waterlow & Sons Ltd. Size 16½ x 33½mm. Perf 12. Denomination in centavos or pesos, in black.

GI 3 1c orange
GI 4 5c yellow
GI 5 10c turquoise blue
GI 6 25c lilac
GI 7 50c yellow green
GI 8 1p yellow brown
GI 9 2p pearl grey
GI10 5p ultramarine
GI11 10p pinkish rose
GI12 25p dark green
GI13 50p vermilion

1904. GI3-13 additionally overprinted '1904', in black, at the top.

GI14	1c orange
GI15	5c yellow
GI16	10c turquoise blue
GI17	25c lilac
GI18	50c yellow green
GI19	1p yellow brown
GI20	2p pearl grey
GI21	5p ultramarine
GI22	10p pinkish rose
GI23	25p dark green
GI24	50p vermilion

1908-11. Engraved by Waterlow & Sons, Ltd. Size 15½ x 33½mm. Perf 12. (As GI4-13).

GI25	5c vermilion
GI26	10c deep green
GI27	25c yellow orange
GI28	50c olive green
GI29	1p dark brown
GI30	1p brown bistre
GI31	2p deep blue
GI32	5p purple
GI33	10p grey black
GI34	25p grey green
GI35	25p rose
GI36	50p blue

1911-1912. Lithographed. Size 17 x 31½mm. Perf 11½.

GI37	5c violet and black/green
a	white label partly showing
GI38	10c green and black
a	white label partly showing
GI39	25c rose red and black/green
a	white label partly showing
GI40	50c red brown and black/blue
a	white label partly showing
GI41	1p blue and black
a	white label partly showing

1913. Engraved and printed by Waterlow & Sons Ltd. Size 17 x 33½mm. Perf 14. Denomination in centavos or Cordobas, in black.

GI42	4c blue
GI43	5c vermilion
GI44	10c deep green
GI45	25c yellow-orange
GI46	50c olive green
GI47	1C brown
GI48	2½C lake

1918-1919. Various issues surcharge in the new currency (Centavos de Cordoba).

5 line surcharge in black, value in numerals, bar below surcharge.

GI49 1c on 5p purple and black (GI32)
GI50 2c on 50p blue and black (GI36)

5 line surcharge in red, value in numerals, no bar.

GI51 5c on 1p blue and black (GI41)

5 line surcharge in black, value in words, no bar.

GI52 2c on 50c olive green and bl (GI46)
GI53 5c on 1p brown bistre and bl (GI30)
GI54 5c on 5p purple and black (GI32)

4 line surcharge in red, value in words, no bar.

GI55 1c on 25c yellow-orange & bl (GI45)

4 line surcharge in black, value in words, no bar.

GI56 1c on 2½C lake and black (GI48)
GI57 2c on 1C brown bistre and bl (GI47)
GI58 10c on 50c olive green & bl (GI46)
GI59 10c on 50c olive green & bl (GI28)

3 line surcharge in black, value in numerals, with bar.

GI60 2c on 25p rose (GI35)

3 line surcharge in black, value in numerals, no bar.

GI61 1c on 2½C lake and black (GI48)
GI62 4c on 2½C lake and black (GI48)
GI63 5c on 1C brown and black (GI47)
GI64 10c on 2½C lake and black (GI48)

to be continued.

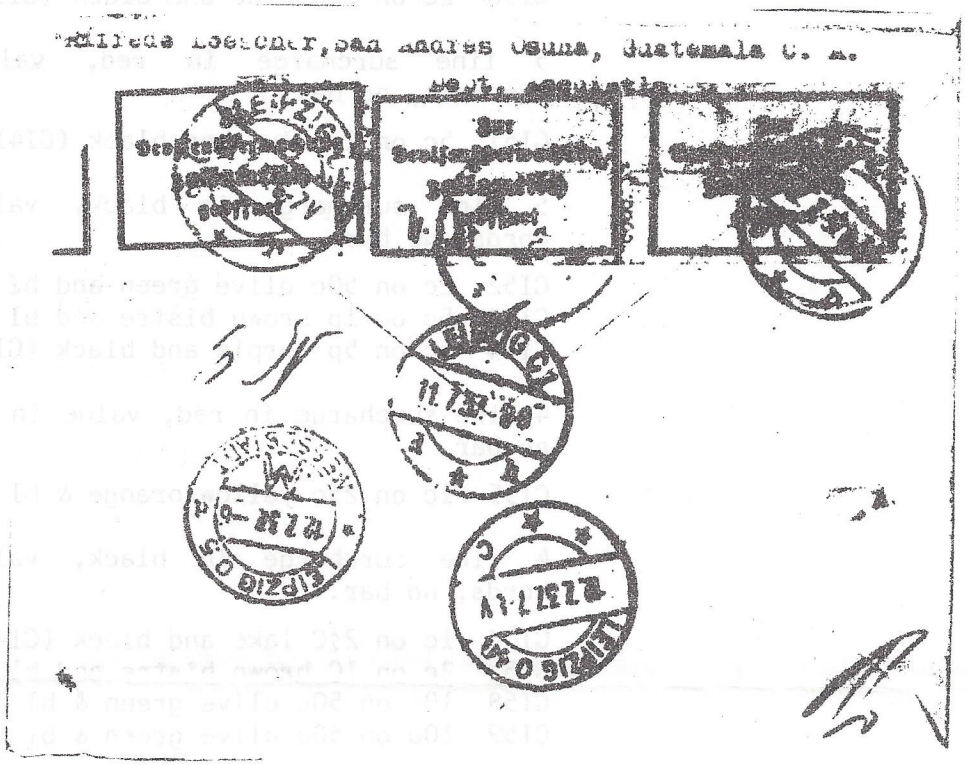
Acknowledgement In issue No.46, we printed an article by James Smith on the Dominican Republic UPU issue of 1891. Norman Gahl has written to inform me that the piece was taken from The Spanish American Philatelist, Vol.IV, Nos.3 and 4 of October 1981/January 1982.

He has sent me further information on the subject from the Collectors Club Philatelist and I hope to reproduce the relevant sections in a future issue.

Exchange Harry Atten, 801 N Riverside Dr #3A, Pompano Beach, FL33062-3901, is a general collector looking to exchange world stamps for Latin American ones. He specifically asks for Central America.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTROL by C J BETTIS

A few years ago I purchased a cover with unusual labels on the reverse. An article in Gibbons Stamp Monthly (The Postal History of Foreign Exchange Control, A R Torrence, May 1982), supplied the answer to what they were.



From 1933 until after the war, Germany checked incoming and outgoing mail for breaches of monetary regulations. Envelopes were slit open across the flap and resealed with labels from a strip. These labels translate as "Opened by Customs for currency control". The label was cancelled with the town of use. The labels were identical throughout the country.

The checking would appear to have been done at random. Only one of three registered items (illustrated) from 1937-39 were opened and none of four ordinary items between 1936 and 1939.

Germany had also used exchange control in 1918-25 when the end of the cover was cut open and resealed with wrap over lables. These labels were not identical throughout the country.

Czechoslovakia, Greece and Sweden also opened and resealed mail with labels for exchange control purposes during and just after the war.

These labels should appear on mail from all Latin American countries to the four countries named above.